# MEMORABLE QUOTES 2012

"Few will have the greatness to bend history itself, but each of us can work to change a small portion of events. It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a man stands up for an ideal or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and these ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance."

-- Robert Kennedy, 1966

"As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of Democracy. Whatever differs from this, to the extent of the difference, is no Democracy."

--Abraham Lincoln, 16<sup>th</sup> President of the United States

"In the view of the Constitution, in the eye of the law, there is in this country no superior, dominant, ruling class of citizens. There is no caste among citizens. In respect of civil rights, all citizens are equal before the law. The humblest is the peer of the most powerful."

**--John Marshall Harlan, Supreme Court Justice,** 1896, dissenting opinion in the Plessy vs Ferguson decision which declared Separate but Equal as the law of the land.

"...I do not believe that the meaning of the Constitution was forever "fixed" at the Philadelphia Convention. To the contrary, the government they devised ...[required] several amendments, a civil war, and momentous social transformation to attain a system of constitutional government and its respect for the individual freedoms and human rights we hold as fundamental today."

**--Thurgood Marshall**, first black Supreme Court Justice, 1967-1991; argued *Brown v Board of Education*, (1954) before Supreme Court

"The Senate has finally passed the civil rights bill...My one fear is of intimidation, to prevent Negro citizens in the South from registering and voting. I hope the Attorney General can find ways of protecting the registration and of preventing retaliation when the Negro citizens of the South exercise their constitutional right."

--Eleanor Roosevelt (1960)

"At times, history and fate meet at a single time in a single place to shape a turning point in man's unending search for freedom. So it was a Lexington and Concord. So it was a century ago at Appomattox. So it was last week in Selma, Alabama...even if the country could double its wealth and 'conquer the stars,' if it proved 'unequal to [the issue of racial inequality], then we will have failed as a people and as a nation."

-- President Lyndon Johnson, 1965

"Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today.....I believe in human beings, and that all human beings should be respected as such, regardless of their color....I'm for truth, no matter who tells it. I'm for justice, no matter who it's for or against."

--Malcolm X, Nation of Islam (1965)

"Every man is our brother, and every man's burden is our own. Where poverty exists, all are poorer—Where hate flourishes, all are corrupted. Where injustice reins, all are unequal."

--Whitney Young, President, National Urban League

"Violence is black children going to school for 12 years and receiving 6 years' worth of education."

#### --Julian Bond

"A community is democratic only when the humblest and weakest can enjoy the highest civil, economic, and social rights that the biggest and most powerful possess."

## --A. Philip Randolph

"Of course laws will not eliminate prejudice from the hearts of human beings. But that is no reason to allow prejudice to continue to be enshrined in our laws to perpetuate injustice."

--Shirley Chisholm, First black congresswoman, New York, 1969-1983

"Race is a factor in the tremendous economic disparities between whites and African Americans, Latinos, Asian and Pacific Americans. During the Great Recession, poverty rates for African Americans and Latinos rose to 25.8 and 25.3 percent, compared to 9.4 percent for whites. Among the more recent Asian American immigrants (e.g., Cambodians and Hmong) poverty rates are as high as 16.8 and 29.9 percent, respectively.

"Unless we address these disparities, this gulf in wealth will continue to widen, and entire communities will be excluded from any hope of the American Dream."

--Barbara Lee, U.S. Representative, California, 9<sup>th</sup> Congressional district

"Racial differences in economic well-being remain large in the United States. Progress toward racial equality has been slow, and continuing high rates of child poverty today will reproduce existing patterns of racial inequality in the future."

--Daniel T. Lichter, ZLhenchao Qian and Martha L. Crowley "Race and poverty..." Focus, Vol. 24, No. 3, Fall-Winter 2006

"Communism forgets that life is individual...Capitalism forgets that life is social."

"True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar. It comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring."

"A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death."

"These are revolutionary times. All over the globe men are revolting against old systems of exploitation and oppression and out of the wounds of a frail world new systems of justice and equality are being born. The shirtless and barefoot people of the land are rising up as never before. The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light. We in the West must support these revolutions."

"Let us realize the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice."

## -- Martin Luther King

"It is imperative that young people be told that we have come a long way; otherwise they are likely to become cynical. A cynical young person...has gone from knowing nothing to believing in nothing."

#### -- Maya Angelou